

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

OES-06 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AGRE-00 /076 W

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R 010920Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2829

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 6103

COLOMBO FOR DEP. ASST. SEC. DUBS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, EAID, BG, IN, US

SUBJECT: ZIA REVIEWS ECONOMIC PROGRAMS AND SECURITY MATTERS
WITH CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ AND DEPT ASST SEC DUBS

1. SUMMARY. MEETING ON NOVEMBER 29, MAJOR GENERAL ZIA
TOLD CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ AND DEPT ASST SEC DUBS THAT
BANGLADESH PUTS TOP PRIORITY ON EFFECTIVE FAMILY PLANNING

WITHOUT THIS, THE NATION CANNOT SURVIVE. CLOSELY RELATED
IS THE NECESSITY TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE
BDG WILL ALSO EMPHASIZE STIMULATING EXPORTS, BEEFING UP
THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND DECENTRALIZING AUTHORITY. THE
MAJOR PROBLEM HE SAW WAS INDIA WHICH HE BELIEVES IS
TRYING TO DESTABILIZE CONDITIONS HERE. ZIA SAW NO QUICK
END TO MARTIAL LAW. HE EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION FOR
U.S. AID AND HAD NO COMPLAINTS ON THIS SCORE. BOTH THE
CONGRESSMAN AND DUBS EXPRESSED CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR
BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC PROGRAMS.

2. CONGRESSMAN STEPHEN J. SOLARZ AND NEA DEPUTY
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS, ESCORTED BY THE AMBASSADOR,

CALLED ON DEPUTY CHIEF (NOW CHIEF) MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR ZIAUR RAHMAN ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29. ZIA USED THE 45-MINUTE MEETING TO BRIEF THE VISITORS, REPRESENTING BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT, ON BANGLADESH'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS.

3. ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE, ZIA SAID SCOPE FOR PROGRESS IN BANGLADESH IS "ENORMOUS." THE NATION HAS THE NATURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUT IT MUST USE THESE FAR BETTER. THE PROBLEM IS THAT "WE ARE DOING LITTLE COMPARED WITH WHAT WE CAN AND MUST DO." WE MUST WORK, HE SAID, AND WE MUST BUILD THE "SYSTEMS" IN ALL FIELDS TO ENSURE THAT PLANS ARE CARRIED OUT EFFECTIVELY.

4. ZIA STRESSED THAT THE TWO KEY TARGET AREAS ARE FAMILY PLANNING AND ACHIEVEMENT OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION. ON THE FORMER, ZIA CITED WELL-KNOWN STATISTICS REGARDING POPULATION GROWTH IN BANGLADESH AND SAID THE RATE MUST BE BROUGHT DOWN RAPIDLY. "IF WE DON'T SUCCEED IN THIS, WE DON'T SURVIVE." HE THOUGHT ONE HUNDRED MILLION TOTAL POPULATION WOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH.

5. ASKED BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ABOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF COMPULSORY FAMILY PLANNING METHODS, ZIA SAID EMPHASIS NOW WOULD BE ON MOTIVATING THE PEOPLE AND BUILDING THE NECESSARY ORGANIZATION TO CARRY OUT PRESENT VOLUNTARY FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE BDG IS CONSIDERING DISINCENTIVES SUCH AS DENIAL OF GOVERNMENT JOBS OR PROMOTIONS TO FAMILIES WITH TOO MANY CHILDREN. PRESSED REGARDING COMPULSORY STERILIZATION, ZIA SAID THIS MIGHT COME LATER. BANGLADESH WOULD STUDY THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES BUT FOR THE PRESENT THE BDG WOULD CONCENTRATE ON OTHER METHODS.

6. REGARDING FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION, ZIA SAID THE BDG WILL PRESS ON WITH EFFORTS TO EXPAND USE OF HIGH YIELD RICE VARIETIES, IMPROVE CONTROL OF WATER RESOURCES, EXPAND RURAL ELECTRIFICATION (ESPECIALLY FOR FLITING WATER), AND PAY "SPECIAL ATTENTION" TO THE NEED TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE USE OF FERTILIZERS.

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7. IN A WIDE-RANGING, SOMEWHAT RAMBLING DISCUSSION, ZIA SINGLED OUT THESE ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION:

A. STRENGTHENING THE PRIVATE SECTOR. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION FROM THE CONGRESSMAN, ZIA SAID THE BDG CANNOT DIGEST INDUSTRIES WHICH HAVE BEEN NATIONALIZED. MOST OPERATE AT A LOSS AND ARE A DRAG ON THE ECONOMY. AN INCREASED SHARE OF THE JUTE TRADE, PRODUCTION OF CLOTHING

MADE FROM JUTE, SPECIALIZED TEXTILES, SMALL TEXTILE MILLS, FISHING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WILL BE TURNED OVER TO PRIVATE INDUSTRY. THE BDG IS ALSO PROVIDING LOANS TO PRIVATE TRADERS IN FOODGRAINS TO ENABLE THEM TO PARTICIPATE MORE ACTIVELY IN THE PURCHASE AND STORAGE OF RICE.

B. ROLE OF WOMEN. BANGLADESH IS FORMING A NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION AND WILL TRY TO PROVIDE INCREASED EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN, ESPECIALLY IN INDUSTRIES SUCH AS HANDICRAFTS, FOOD PROCESSING AND CANNING.

C. DECENTRALIZATION. ZIA WANTS TO GIVE MORE POWER TO THE THANAS (COUNTY) AND THE UNTION (TOWNSHIP) COUNCILS. THE VILLAGERS KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE BUT ARE HAMPERED BY THE BUREAUCRACY IN DACCA. THE BDG WANTS TO REDUCE LIMITATIONS ON LOCAL INITIATIVE.

D. EDUCATION. MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE, ZIA SAID, IN EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AT ALL LEVELS, FROM PRIMARY TO ADULT TRAINING CLASSES.

E. OTHERS. BANGLADESH HOPES TO EXPAND EXPORTS OF JUTE PRODUCTS, TEA AND HIDES AND SKINS AND BEGIN THE EXPORT OF TIMER. IT IS TRYING TO EXPLOIT THE NATION'S NATURAL GAS RESOURCES, REORGANIZE LAW AND ORDER FORCES, IMPROVE URBAN SLUMS AND DEVELOP COASTAL RESOURCES. ZIA SAID IBRD PRESIDENT MCNAMARA SHOWED INTEREST IN THE LAST TWO POSSIBILITIES DURING HIS RECENT VISIT.

8. ZIA SAID THERE WAS ONE OTHER DIFFICULTY HE WANTED TO MENTION WHICH IS INTERFERING WITH BANGLADESH'S DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THIS IS OBSTRUCTIONISM BY INDIA. BY SUBSTANTIAL DIVERSION OF WATER AT FARAKKA IN THE DRY SEASON, THE GOI IS CREATING REAL PROBLEMS FOR BANGLADESH. ZIA SAID HE APPRECIATED OUR HELP AT THE UN AND WAS GLAD BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD RESUME, BUT IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHETHER INDIA WOULD ADOPT A CONSTRUCTIVE
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ATTITUDE. SO FAR, IT HAD NOT. ALSO, CROSS-BORDER INCURSIONS, WITH THE ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE GOI, ARE ON THE INCREASE. ZIA SAID HE HOPED INDIA WOULD ACCEPT THE PRESENT BDG AS A FACT OF LIFE AND STOP INTERFERING IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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9. ASKED BY CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ ABOUT THE LIKELY DURATION OF MARTIAL LAW, ZIA SAID THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE ARE NO INSTITUTIONS WITH POPULAR PARTICIPATION CAPABLE OF TAKING OVER. THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT DEGENERATED INTO ONE-PARTY RULE. BANGLADESH LACKS THE EXPERIENCE AND THE INSTITUTIONS. UNION COUNCIL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN JANUARY. NEXT THERE WILL BE ELECTIONS AT THE THANA (COUNTY) LEVEL (HE DECLINED TO SPECULATE WHEN THESE WOULD OCCUR), AND THEN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DECIDE WHEN TO PROCEED TO THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

10. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION, ZIA SAID HE HAD NO COMPLAINTS REGARDING U.S. AID. THE U.S., HE SAID, HAS BEEN MOST HELPFUL AND GENEROUS. THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS ON THE BDG SIDE IN PUTTING ALL AVAILABLE AID TO USE, BUT HE HOPES TO CORRECT THIS.

11. DEPT ASST SEC DUBS COMPLIMENTED THE BDG ON PROGRESS MADE SINCE HIS LAST VISIT IN OCTOBER 1975 AND SAID THE USG SUPPORTS BANGLADESH'S INDEPENDENCE AND ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE WANT BANGLADESH TO SUCCEED. IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER DONORS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SOUND PROJECTS. DUBS SAID WE ALSO RESPECT BANGLADESH'S CONFIDENTIAL

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FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ SAID HE PERSONALLY SUPPORTS FOREIGN AID AND HAD IN FACT INTRODUCED A BILL UNDER WHICH WE WOULD PROVIDE SEVEN-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT OF OUR GNP IN FOREIGN AID. HE WAS SURE THE CONGRESS

WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AID TO BANGLADESH, BUT THIS WOULD BE MUCH EASIER IF BANGLADESH DEVOTED MAXIMUM EFFORT TO SELF-HELP MEASURES AND MADE THE BEST USE OF ITS OWN RESOURCES.

12. COMMENT. OTHER ASPECTS OF THESE VISITS ARE REPORTED SEPARATELY. THE CALL ON ZIA GAVE THE CONGRESSMAN AND DEP ASST SEC DUBS A GOOD FEEL FOR ZIA'S DEDICATION AND GRASP OF BANGLADESH'S PROBLEMS. IT WAS ALSO APPARENT THAT HE AND THE BDG HAVE A TREMENDOUS JOB AHEAD. IT HAS YET TO BE DEMONSTRATED WHETHER HE (OR ANYONE) CAN HANDLE THE RANGE OF PROGRAMS HE OUTLINED. THE TALK WAS ALSO USEFUL TO DRIVE HOME TO ZIA THE FACT THAT BANGLADESH ENJOYS WIDE SUPPORT IN BOTH EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND CAN COUNT ON CONTINUED U.S. AID IF IT MOBILIZES ITS OWN RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY.
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